

SHIGELLOSIS
(Reportable Disease - Report to Local Health Agency)

IMMUNIZATION: None

INCUBATION PERIOD: Usually 1-3 days, varies from 1-7 days

SYMPTOMS: Can be asymptomatic.
Mild infection - watery or loose stools for several days.
Small-bowel infection - sudden onset of fever, headache, profuse watery diarrhea and sometimes toxemia. Convulsions can occur - important complication in children.
Large-bowel infection - abdominal cramps, tenderness, mucoid stools with or without blood or ineffective and painful straining when trying to pass stool.
Rarely bacteremia, Reiter's syndrome, hemolytic-uremic syndrome, colon perforation and toxic encephalopathy.

PERIOD OF COMMUNICABILITY:

During acute infection and until organisms no longer present in feces - usually 4 weeks following illness.
Appropriate antibiotic therapy reduces infectivity to a few days.

MODE OF TRANSMISSION:

Mainly by direct or indirect fecal-oral transmission from an infected or colonized person who fails to wash hands and under fingernails after having a bowel movement. Infected persons can then contaminate food, beverages and inanimate objects to spread disease to others.
Other modes of transmission include homosexual activity, fecal contamination of milk and water, and by flies which can transfer organisms from latrines to a nonrefrigerated food item.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE:

Exclusion of all staff and attendees with diarrhea until 24 hours after diarrhea ceases. If several persons are infected, a cohort system should be considered until two consecutive stool cultures, 24 hours apart, and not sooner than 48 hours following discontinuation of antibiotic therapy, are negative.
Children and staff without diarrhea who are excreting Shigella do not need to be excluded unless an outbreak occurs and it is not controlled through improved hygiene.

CONTACTS/FOLLOW-UP:

Ill contacts of shigellosis infected persons should be excluded from food handling and the care of children until diarrhea ceases and 2 successive negative stool cultures are obtained 24 hours apart.